

**Washington State Department of Health
October 23, 2005**

Issue Description & Background:

- The continued shrinking of federal and state discretionary dollars and the delegation of federal programs to the state and local levels has increased the importance of state and tribal collaboration to improve the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs).
- Government-to-Government relations are a fundamental principle in tribes' interactions with states. Developing and maintaining this interaction is an ongoing, two-way process.
- The intent of the Washington State Centennial Accord is to enhance and strengthen the government-to-government relationship that exists between the tribes and the state. It stresses the importance of state agencies and tribes working together to develop and implement policy which affects tribal communities and Indian people.
- The new Millennium Agreement moves state/tribal relations forward by setting more specific goals for mutual commitment.
- The Centennial Accord and subsequent agency plans are developed to provide for improved service delivery and the resolution of issues of mutual concern.
- The Centennial Accord and New Millennium Agreement create an atmosphere within state health agencies in which working with tribes is no longer an option or a unique circumstance.

PROPOSED ACTION:

- Over the next year, the Department of Health proposes to work on development of an agency tribal consultation policy that will provide a consistent and equitable standard for working with Washington tribes.
- Through the principles of consultation, the Department of Health will work to facilitate better understanding and respect of the rights and interest of tribal governments at all levels of the organization.
- The goal is to create sustainable relationships with tribes and other tribal health care organizations to promote opportunities for partnerships in agency program areas.
- The tribal liaison will work with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, tribal entities, and tribal organizations to facilitate development of this policy.